

EPA-Region II
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY &
REMEDIATION RESPONSE

1985 AUG 30 PM 4:35
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

231816



POLLUTION REPORT

DATE: August 21, 1985

Region II
Response and Prevention Branch
Edison, New Jersey 08837

TO: C. Daggett, EPA
W. Librizzi, EPA
F. Rubel, EPA
W. Andrews, EPA
J. Marshall, EPA
M. Ledman, NYCDEP
ERD, EPA Washington, D.C.
(E-Mail)
N. Nosenchuck, NYSDEC
NRC
USCG 3rd Dist. (mer)
TAT

(201) 321-6670 - Commercial
(201) 548-8730 - 24 Hour Emergency
340-6670 - FTS

POLREP NO.: One (1) and Final
INCIDENT NAME: Liberty Heat Treating Company
SITE/SPILL NO.: 807-85
POLLUTANT: Potassium Cyanide
CLASSIFICATION: Potential Major
SOURCE: Warehouse Fire
LOCATION: 100-15 94th Ave., Queens, New York
AMOUNT: Unknown
WATER BODY: None

1. SITUATION:

A. At approximately 1400 hrs. on August 14, 1985, a fire erupted in the Liberty Heat Treating Company Building at 100-15 94th Avenue in Ozone Park, Queens. The company thermally treats finished and raw metals and employs batch operations utilizing potassium cyanide baths. The fire apparently started in the wooden roof beams of the one-story building and the potential for release of hydrogen cyanide gas, which can occur when potassium cyanide reacts with water, necessitated the evacuation of workers and residents within a four block area. The fire was, however, contained before reaching the cyanide. Approximately fourteen firefighters were treated at nearby hospitals, suffering from a combination of heat stress and smoke inhalation.

2. ACTION TAKEN:

A. EPA and TAT conducted a site response on August 14, 1985, at 1830 hrs. Upon arrival, it was observed that vehicular traffic, in the vicinity of the fire, was still being restricted by the New York City Police Department.

Members of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the New York City Fire Department and the owner of Liberty Heat Treating Company were all present at the site.

B. The response team proceeded to monitor the site perimeter for the presence of cyanide using Draeger Tubes. No cyanide readings were obtained with the tubes. Additionally, photo-documentation of the burned out building and surrounding area was performed. EPA members donned Level B protective gear and performed air monitoring, with Draeger Tubes and the organic vapor analyzer (OVA), on all sides of the building. Except for a level of 20 ppm obtained using the OVA in the rear of the building, no significant levels were obtained.

C. NYC Fire Department officials expressed their gratitude to the response team members for conducting air monitoring at the site. These officials explained that no previous air monitoring had been conducted prior to EPA's arrival.

D. On August 15, 1985, EPA was informed that analysis of water runoff created by the firefighting revealed levels ranging from 7 to 20 ppm of cyanide. This analysis was performed by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection. EPA advised NYCDEP officials of the required disposal procedures for such material.

3. FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. No follow-up is expected for this incident.

CASE CLOSED X

CASE PENDING _____

SUBMITTED BY

Joseph Rotola
Joseph Rotola, OSC
Response and Pre-
vention Branch

(TAT)

DATE RELEASED

8/27/85